

Eades, Richard (1809-1867)

Richard Eades (1809-1867), physician, was born on 15 August 1809 in Dublin, son of William George Eades, wine merchant, and his wife Mary, née Cranwill. He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin (B.A., 1832; M.B., 1836), and London (M.R.C.S., 1834). In the cholera epidemic of 1832-33 he went to Canada as surgeon of a migrant ship and visited hospitals there, in New York and elsewhere in America. He later went to Paris to study botany and chemistry. Back in Dublin, he lectured on materia medica at the Ledwich School of Medicine in 1838 and in 1842 at the Park Street and the Richmond Hospital Medical Schools; he was also physician to the Fever Hospital, Kilmainham, in 1847-48. He was co-opted a fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland on 4 October 1844.

With his wife and infant he arrived in South Australia in the *Roman Emperor* on 23 October 1848. He registered with the Medical Board on 2 January 1849, built up a successful practice in Adelaide as a physician and took a leading part in democratic politics. The discovery of gold prompted his move to Melbourne in January 1852, but he probably did not work on the goldfields. In 1854 he became the second President of the recently-formed Medical Society of Victoria.

Apart from his practice Eades was active in public affairs. He helped to found the Philosophical Institute of Victoria in 1855 and was a member of its council in 1858-59 and of the Royal Society of Victoria in 1860-61 and vice-president in 1860. He also served on the Exploration Committee which organised the Victorian Exploring Expedition from 1858 to 1862.

In 1854 he represented La Trobe ward in the Melbourne City Council and was mayor in 1859-60. On 28 August 1860 when large crowds gathered outside Parliament House to demonstrate against inadequacies of a land bill, Eades courageously read the Riot Act; although the demonstrators clashed seriously with the police, no stone was thrown at him.

He was physician to the Melbourne Hospital in 1859-66 and official visitor to the Lunatic Asylum in 1856-67. He was appointed city health officer on the death of Dr John Macadam in 1865. An early advocate of the Volunteer Forces, he was assistant surgeon to the Metropolitan Company of Artillery. He was a member of the Burke and Wills Exploration Committee.

In 1861 he lectured on materia medica in the Government Analytical Laboratory and with Macadam began an extra-mural course for medical students designed to fulfil the requirements of the Medical Boards of Great Britain and Ireland. The enterprise of Eades and Macadam, at a time when the university could not obtain funds, undoubtedly hastened the establishment of the Medical School. When it opened in 1862, Eades was appointed lecturer in materia medica and therapeutics, a position he held until 1867. He was highly regarded as a physician, and as a fluent lecturer held the attention and the affection of his students. His fine baritone voice, his extensive repertoire of Irish songs and his wit made him very popular at special dinners. He died at his home in Windsor on 12 October 1867, and was buried with Anglican rites in the Melbourne general cemetery.

Eades married first, in 1843 at Dublin Sarah Christine Beare by whom he had two sons and three daughters, and second, at Melbourne in 1856 Charlotte Eleanor McKee, née Beare, by whom he had

one son and three daughters. He was survived by one son and two daughters of the first marriage and by his widow and her four children. His family was left in poor circumstances and a public meeting was held on 20 March 1868 at the Mechanics' Institute to raise funds for their relief.

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Sources: Russell, KF, Australian Dictionary of Biography, 1972, VOL.4; "Science and the making of Victoria", Royal Society of Victoria, 2001.



Richard Eades, the first lecturer in materia medica and therapeutics.